

*Attention: Commerce Committee and To Whom It May Concern:*

*No on HB 5263 ! It's already bad enough that rabbits aren't even classified as other livestock and already subjected to filthy and unsanitary conditions and due to lack of inspections, meat rabbits often live in stressful filthy conditions and are full disease and parasites.*

*Meat rabbits are the same as pet rabbits which I have and love. They are loving, sensitive and intelligent companion animals and bring my family and I so much joy. This is so wrong. All of my rabbits live indoors with us and our dog, all at spayed and neutered and live as long as a dog or a cat. That is not all, this also means rabbits may be fully conscious while being slaughtered. 🙄 The rabbits do not need to be stunned before slaughter and an inspector is not required to be present leaving them vulnerable to the worst kind of abuse as seen in widely documented inhumane treatment and animal abuse.*

*Not to mention the RHVD2 Virus, which is statewide and also rapid throughout the country and is a highly contagious disease which affects both domestic and wild rabbits, including hares and cottontails according to the Connecticut State Veterinarian, Dr. Jane Lewis which has been found I think New England Cottontail as well as the Snowshoe Hare in Connecticut.*

*Also, despite being considered the most sustainable meat, it's carbon emissions are higher than pork or chicken. Just 212 grams of rabbit meat can produce as much as one kilogram of greenhouse gasses which makes it almost five times as polluting as lentils. Also rabbits produce a high concentration of ammonia, high cause poor air quality.*

*The shy, quiet and gentle nature of these animals makes them easy to exploit. But behind closed doors, rabbits are suffering immensely at the hands of those who see them as mere units of production. Rabbits are fragile animals and intensive farming of the species has a high mortality rate, although they are often slaughtered as young as eight to twelve weeks old, as many as 15 to 30 percent die before even reaching this age. This is largely due to poor health,*

*commonly respiratory and intestinal diseases. The wire mesh flooring of cages can cut into a rabbit's paws a painful infection that leads to abscesses and bone infection.*

*In 2015, investigators from animal protection charity Last Chance for Animals went undercover at a Pel Freez processing plant in Arkansas, the largest rabbit slaughterhouse in America. The workers did attempt to stun them with the dull edge of a knife but many of the rabbits remained conscious. Their legs were then broken, and they began to scream. Finally, shackled upside down, their heads were cut off. This was prolonged by the use of a blunt knife, many rabbits undergo vicious sawing and hacking, drawing out their already barbaric end. Rabbits are normally silent creatures; their final screams indicate they are experiencing extreme pain.*

*Nothing about farming domestic rabbits for food is humane, safe or environmentally good. Enough animals are already killed for human consumption, please consider taking a moral stand.*

*Sincerely,*

*Janet Geren*